

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, EEC

SUBJECT: EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, MARCH 3-4: REACTIONS TO
PREPCON INVITATIONS.

REF: EC BRUSSELS 1196

1. THE EC COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN BRUSSELS
MARCH 3 AND 4 DISCUSSED PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING
CONSUMER/PRODUCER PREPCON. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DEBATE
REGARDING FRANCE'S ISSUANCE OF INVITATIONS TO THE
CONFERENCE. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS POINTED OUT THAT WHILE
THE MEMBER STATES HAD AGREED, AT THE EC COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 10-11 (REFTEL), THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE SHOULD BE
HELD THEY HAD NOT AGREED ON THE SPECIFIC DATE. THE FRENCH
REPRESENTATIVE SAID THE FRENCH WERE MERELY FOLLOWING AN
AGREED UPON COURSE OF ACTION. HE NOTED THAT THE FRENCH
WISHED TO ISSUE THE INVITATIONS PRIOR TO THE OPEC HEADS OF
GOVERNMENT MEETING IN ALGIERS.

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2. COMMENT: WHILE THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOME

GRUMBLING ABOUT THE FRENCH ACTION, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THE MEMBER STATES WILL, IN FACT, MAKE SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES FOR FRANCE ON THIER HANDLING OF THE INVITATIONS. END COMMENT.

3. THE MINISTERS ALSO DISCUSSED THE ADVISABILITY OF HAVING THE IEA REPRESENTED IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY IN THE PREPCON. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS SAID THAT THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE "HELPFUL" TO HAVE THE IEA PRESENT,NOTING THAT THE ORGANIZATION WAS NOT ON THE FRENCH LIST OF INVITEES. THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY RESPONDED THAT THEY HAD NO FIXED POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF INVITING THE IEA. THEY DID NOTE, HOSEVER, THAT AN INVITATION TO THE IEA MIGHT PROVOKE A SIMILAR REQUEST FROM OPEC. WE ARE NOT YET CLEAR ON THE OUTCOME OF THE MINISTERS' DISCUSSIONS OF THIS SUBJECT ALTHOUGH SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THE MATTER FURTHER AND DID NOT RULE OUT INVITING THE IEA OR, AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED, THE OECD, TO THE PREPCON PRIOR TO APRIL 7.
GREENWALD

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